

III. AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

The following listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in this patent application:

1. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for orienting a part, the part having been detached from a web having a plurality of parts, the apparatus comprising:

a duct including an interior sloped side, the interior sloped side creating a first opening for receiving the part ~~and~~, a second opening that is smaller than the first opening, and a third opening that is larger than the second opening,

wherein the first, second and third opening are vertically aligned along at least one edge thereof; and

wherein the part exits the ~~second~~ third opening in a substantially vertical orientation.

2. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising:

a machine for detaching the part from the web;

wherein the duct is coupled to the machine so that the part is received by the first opening of the duct after being detached from the web.

3. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the machine includes a punch and a die, the die including an opening through which the part passes before ~~it~~ the part is received by the duct.

3 / A. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the interior sloped side is made of one of the group consisting of polymeric material and polished metal.

4 / B. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the interior sloped side is planar.

5 / C. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the duct includes a plurality of substantially parallel interior sloped sides.

62 / 8 / 7. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the part has a curled shape, the apparatus further comprising:

a container for holding the part, the container including an open end and a convex contoured end;

wherein the open end of the container is coupled to the duct to receive the part from the ~~second~~ third opening of the duct; and

wherein the convex contoured end of the container substantially conforms to the curled shape of the part.

9 / 8. (Original) The apparatus of claim ~~7~~ ⁸, wherein the container accommodates a plurality of parts with a curled shape stacked upon each other.

10/9. (Original) The apparatus of claim ⁸7, wherein the container is coupled to the duct using a u-shaped channel.

Claims 10-20 (Cancelled).

11 21. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for orienting a part having a curled shape, the part having been detached from a web having a plurality of parts, the apparatus comprising:

B2 a duct including an interior sloped side, the interior sloped side creating a first opening for receiving the part ~~and~~, a second opening that is smaller than the first opening, and a third opening that is larger than the second opening.

wherein the first, second and third opening are vertically aligned along at least one edge thereof;

a container for holding the part, the container including an open end and a convex contoured end;

wherein the open end of the container is coupled to the duct to receive the part from the ~~second~~ third opening of the duct; and

wherein the convex contoured end of the container substantially conforms to the curled shape of the part.

12 22. (Previously Added) The apparatus of claim ¹¹21, wherein the container accommodates a plurality of parts with a curled shape stacked upon each other.

10/043,662
Response to 10/8/03 Office Action

5

13 ~~23~~. (Previously Added) The apparatus of claim ~~21~~¹¹, wherein the container is coupled to the duct using a u-shaped channel.

B²
24-27. (Cancelled)

10/043,662
Response to 10/8/03 Office Action

9